

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 25, 2008

Statement of Governor Haley Barbour  
On HUD's approval of the Port of Gulfport project

From the earliest days after the worst natural disaster in American history, when Coast residents were sorting through the wreckage of their homes and dealing with containers from the port that had been strewn into neighborhoods by the storm, we knew it would be imperative to restore the port not only in the interest of economic development but also public safety. HUD's approval of this important project will allow that to happen.

Mississippi's whole approach to recovery has been to build back better and more safely than ever, in education, housing, jobs and the overall quality of life for South Mississippians. Our comprehensive programs are designed to get families back in homes, restore and create new jobs, and rebuild the Coast as quickly as possible.

I appreciate HUD's recognition that in order to accomplish these goals Mississippi must not only be true to the intent of congressional direction but also innovative in our comprehensive approach to recovery. Restoration at the Port of Gulfport has been a key component of Mississippi's comprehensive recovery plan since the fall of 2005. In terms of job creation and commerce the port project will have a huge and beneficial impact.

To date, Mississippi has put \$723 million into programs to restore affordable housing for 17,000 to 21,000 workforce income level families, and more than \$1.3 billion has been awarded for more than 18,200 homeowner assistance grants. Our commitment to provide resources for affordable housing initiatives and all other elements of the comprehensive plan will definitely continue.

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